

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EA-06

SAJ-01 /063 W

----- 017350

R 131600Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL MUNICH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5593

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: STRAUSS ASH WEDNESDAY RALLY

### SUMMARY:

FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS'S TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ASH WEDNESDAY SPEECH, GIVEN THIS YEAR IN PASSAU, WAS ROUSING SUCCESS FOR CSU AND STRAUSS. OVERFLOW AUDIENCE RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO HARDHITTING SPEECH THAT COVERED POLITICAL WATERFRONT AND THAT WAS, IN ESSENCE, EARLY SALVO IN 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

1) STRAUSS MOVED VENUE OF ASH WEDNESDAY POLITICAL RALLY HE HAS HELD IN VILSHOFEN SINCE 1949 TO PASSAU THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO USE NIBELUNGEN HALL, LARTEST IN LOWER BAVARIA. VILSHOFEN HALL USED HERETOFORE HAD CLEARLY BEEN TOO SMALL, WITH MAXIMUM CRUSH CAPACITY OF 800 AND CSU OFFICIALS THOUGHT STRAUSS MIGHT BE ABLE FILL PASSAU HALL, WITH CAPACITY OF 4,500 TO 5,000. IN FACT, ONE HOUR

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BEFORE STRAUSS WAS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR SOME 7,000 HAD JAMMED INTO

HALL (PRESS, CONGEN AND CSU ESTIMATE), AND DOORS HAD TO BE CLOSED. SOME 1,000 MORE STOOD OUTSIDE BUILDING LISTENING TO SPEECH ON LOUDSPEAKERS. AUDIENCE WAS NOISILY ENTHUSIASTIC. EXTENT OF THIS ENTHUSIASM WAS APPARENT FROM FACT THAT OVERCROWDING PREVENTED WAITRESSES FROM MAKING USUAL ROUNDS, AND BAVARIAN CROWD NEVERTHELESS STAYED EAGERLY, MANY STANDING, FOR FOUR HOURS WITHOUT BEER OR FOOD.

2) STRAUSS'S SPEECH WAS HARD-HITTING ATTACK AGAINST BONN GOVERNMENT ON FULL RANGE OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. LANGUAGE HE USED WAS SHARP AND WHILE NOT QUITE FITTING WITH STATESMAN IMAGE HE HAS BEEN SEEKING TO CONVEY RECENTLY, IT DID SUIT ASH WEDNESDAY BEER HALL OCCASION, AND WAS LAPPED UP BY AUDIENCE. AS EXAMPLE, HE USED WORD "PIGSTY" IN DESCRIBING ECONOMIC MESS HE CHARGED BONN HAD LED COUNTRY INTO.

3) ON DOMESTIC SIDE, STRAUSS COMPARED PRESENT SITUATION WITH FAVORABLE ECONOMY UNION HAD TURNED OVER TO SPD/FDP COALITION IN 1969. HE HIT HARD AT UNEMPLOYMENT, AROUSING CONSIDERABLE ECHO AMONG LOCALS IN AUDIENCE WHEN HE NOTED UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE IN LOWER BAVARIA HAS REACHED 16 PERCENT, AND THAT IN UPPER PALATINATE 11 PERCENT. HE HIT HARDEST AT BRANDT, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS "PSEUDO-PROPHET", BUT CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY PERSONAL ATTACKS AGAINST SCHMIDT WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS LAST HOPE FOR SPD. HE DID CLAIM SCHMIDT WAS AVOIDING SEEKING POST OF PARTY CHAIRMAN BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT AS CHAIRMAN HE WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO COPE WITH JUSOS.

4) ON FOREIGN POLICY SIDE, STRAUSS STATED UNION GOVERNMENT WOULD RESPECT EASTERN TREATIES, BUT, HE ADDED, AS THEY WERE INTERPRETED BY FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT. UNION GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WOULD NOT CONCLUDE TREATIES TO WHICH IT COULD GIVE ONE MEANING IN BONN WHILE OTHER TREATY PARTNER COULD GIVE DIFFERENT MEANING IN ITS CAPITAL. BONN, HE SAID, MADE ITSELF RIDICULOUS IN CRITICIZING AUSTRIA OVER RECOGNITION OF GDR. HE ADDED LITTLE ON CHINA TO WHAT HE HAD ALREADY SAID PUBLICLY, BUT HE DID INSIST THAT OSTPOLITIK COULD NOT STOP AT MOSCOW. HE ALSO MAINTAINED THAT IN TALKING WITH CHINESE HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR WHERE HIS POSITIONS DIFFERED FROM THEIRS, AS WELL AS WHERE THERE WERE POINTS THAT COINCIDED, AND HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE ONLY TOO HAPPY IF EGON BAHR BEHAVED WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN NEGOTIATORS THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAY HE, STRAUSS, HAD ACTED WITH CHINESE. HE PLACED, FINALLY, GREAT STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WEST EUROPEAN UNITY, PARTICULARLY IN CONTEXT OF SEEKING DETENTE WITH THE EAST.

5) WHILE STRAUSS INSISTED HE WAS NOT FIGHTING FOR A JOB OR A CAREER, HIS PERFORMANCE WAS CLEARLY AIMED AT PROJECTING HIMSELF AND CSU ONTO NATIONAL SCENE. CSU ELECTORAL SLOGAN OF LAST OCTOBER, "WITH US FOR BAVARIA", WAS SUITABLY AMENDED TO READ

"WITH US FOR BAVARIA, GERMANY AND EUROPE", AND THIS HUNG BEHIND STRUASS AS HE SPOKE. RALLY WAS, IN EFFECT, OPENING ROUND OF NEXT YEAR'S BUNDESTAG ELECTION. CSU SECRETARY GENERAL TANDLER SAID AS MUCH WHEN, FOLLOWING STRAUSS ON PODIUM HE SAID APPLAUSE FOR STRAUSS WAS NOT ENOUGH AND CALLED ON AUDIENCE TO FIGHT IN SUPPORT OF STRAUSS AND UNION, FIRST IN VARIOUS LANDTAG ELECTIONS THIS YEAR; THEN, HE ADDED, THEY WOULD MEET IN PASSAU NEXT ASH WEDNESDAY TO TALK ABOUT BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS.

6) STRAUSS APPEARS TO SENSE STRONG POSSIBILITY OF UNION VICTORY, AND PERFORMANCE HE GAVE WAS THAT OF EITHER POTENTIAL CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE, OR STRONGMAN IN SOMEONE ELSE'S CABINET. CSU OFFICIALS ARE DELIGHTED OVER WHAT THEY CONSIDER ROUSING SUCCESS AT PASSAU. THIS FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF STRUASS'S STRENGTH IN HIS BAVARIAN REDOUBT MAY NOT HELP HIM ANY IN REST OF FRG, BUT FOLLOWING ON WHAT CSU CIRCLES CONSIDER HIS SUCCESS RECENTLY IN BERLIN, IT WILL CERTAINLY

ADD TO HIS ALREADY CONSIDERABLE BOUNCE AND WILL NOT MAKE IT ANY EASIER FOR CDU LEADERS TO KEEP HIM IN CHECK. SPIVACK

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